



Concept Paper # 229, REVISED

Name of document to be reviewed:

Iowa Electronic Vital Records System – Funding from IOWAccess

(Please check one item listed in the following two sections)

Document for review and approval:

- ☐ Request for Proposal (RFP)
- ☐ Request for Service (RFS)
- ☐ Request for Quote (RFQ)
- ☐ Invitation to Qualify

- ☐ Sole Source Procurement
- ☐ Statement of Work
- ☐ Staff Augmentation
- ☐ Master Agreement Purchase

NOTE: Sole source procurements will also need authorization from DAS Procurement for this type of purchase. Please also contact DAS Procurement at this location:

<http://das.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/solesource%202010.pdf>

Document for review only:

☐ Master Agreement

☐ Request for Information (RFI)

Agency:

Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Statistics

RFP Reference #: RFP1113588298

Release Date: 08/21/2012

Intent to Award Date: 01/14/2013

This project is requesting IOWAccess funds: Yes ☒ No ☐

NOTE: IOWAccess concept papers are to be sent to Wes Hunsberger (Wes.Hunsberger@iowa.gov) for an internal DAS review.

Projected cost over \$50,000? Yes ☒ No ☐



Projected agency staff hours over 750?

Yes X

No

Project Cost, Funds and Funding Source:

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted by the DAS in August of 2012 and two qualified Vendors submitted proposals. Both vendors have produced and customized (COTS) off the shelf Electronic Vital Records Information System in several other U.S. States and Territories. The RFP requested the vendors to include costs for a 6-year contract which would phase in each Vital Event module. A letter of intent was issued on January 14, 2013 to Netsmart, of Great River, New York subject to the execution of a written contract and also subject to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) securing sufficient funding for the project.

This proposal is requesting funding for phase I, the electronic death registration system module (EDRS), which will re-engineer the current death registration system and enhance services to all stakeholders and citizens of the State of Iowa.

Please list the internal and external resources/costs for the purchase:

Internal Resources/Costs:

DAS-ITE has proposed estimated hardware setup and hosting costs. The estimated one-time hardware cost is \$125,000 and on-going yearly hosting is estimated at \$50,000.

External Resources/Costs:

The vendor proposal for the EDRS module is \$1,025,787 and includes customization for Iowa and licensing fees.

Timelines:

The target implementation date for the electronic death registration system (EDRS) is December 31, 2013. Implementation of customized electronic registration systems for each of the remaining vital record functions will follow as adequate funding is secured for birth, fetal death, marriage, dissolution of marriage, and termination of pregnancy reporting modules.

Goal:

To modernize and improve the preparation, accuracy and completion of all steps governing death certification so to expedite finalization of the legal processes encountered by family and heirs of deceased Iowans *and* to accomplish this through statewide installation of an Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS), administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health, and used uniformly by medical personnel, funeral directors and state/local government officials.

We will obtain a commercial off-the-shelf Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) that may be quickly and effectively configured to meet the State of Iowa-specific laws, rules and business requirements regarding death events and to make this system available for use by citizens and key players in the death registry process.

The electronic system will provide the gateway for a variety of stakeholders to securely use the system, complete the necessary steps to register death events, issue certified death certificates needed by family members for



legal and other purposes, and provide easy on-line access to descendants requesting death certificates. While service to family and heirs is paramount, the professionals who use the system will benefit as well. Key players in the death certification process include:

- Iowa Citizens
- Hospitals/Hospices – All Iowa hospitals are required to maintain a registry of persons who die in the facility and to initiate a *fact of death* record.
- Physicians – Iowa's 10,000 physicians certify the *cause of death* information on death certificates.
- Funeral Directors – approximately 940 Iowa-licensed funeral directors who have affiliation with one or more of the 425 licensed mortuary science facilities in Iowa provide direct service to affected family.
- County Medical Examiner and Deputy County Medical Examiners - a physician appointed by the county to investigate any death which is sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, unattended, or involves an injury.
- State Medical Examiner – a physician within the department of Public Health serves to investigate any death in which the circumstances are sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious or unattended.
- County Registrars (County Recorders) – the 99 County Recorder offices serve as the local gateway for citizens to obtain certificate copies of properly registered vital event certificates.
- Iowa Health Statistics – The Health Statistics Bureau registers, amends and issues certified copies for all Iowa Vital Record Events.

Upon approval of this application, IDPH will complete the procurement process initiated in August of 2012 by contracting with the vendor (Netsmart) and product development. The product of this effort will be a customized Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) to include a customized back office system that will securely amend and print death records. This EDRS will also include a customer service/accounting module(s) for all death certificate requests and will allow IDPH to convert existing data from the mainframe and other sources. The end result will be a comprehensive centralized system for the registration, amendment and issuance of certified copies of death certificates. The customer service module will have the ability for entitled parties to request on-line from the department's website any death certificates they would be entitled to receive. At completion, certified copies of death certificates will be available in a shorter turnaround time, providing an improved service to the citizens of Iowa. The target implementation date for the electronic death registration system (EDRS) is December 31, 2013.

We hope to follow the death module with implementation of customized electronic registrations for births, fetal deaths, marriages, dissolutions of marriage, and termination of pregnancy reporting. A fully integrated electronic vital records system will enhance current services to data providers, data users, and customers requesting certified copies.

Background:

While this application is about process and technology, at its heart is the need to provide a competent, expedited service to the citizens of Iowa at a time of great need. Coping with the death of a loved-one, be that person a spouse or other family member, is perhaps the most difficult of life's events. At a time when grief and confusion are dominant, family members must make decisions and follow processes that would be difficult even without the emotion and turmoil that accompany a person's passing. In Iowa, family members are fortunate to have the



assistance of professionals such as doctors, funeral directors and county recorders to help grieving people get through the necessary legal processes. In some cases, individuals or family members request to preplan their own or loved ones burial and have the necessary details already in place prior to their death. Among other things, death certificates are required to close accounts, claim death benefits for survivors, and to resolve insurance claims.

The family and those affected by one's passing have a right to expect accurate and expeditiously-prepared and delivered legal documentation. They have little, if any, understanding of the various steps needed to prepare and deliver death certificates. Iowa's network of professionals, governed by responsibilities expressed in law and rules, does an admirable job in preparation, documentation and delivery of death certificates. However, over the years the system and requirements thereof have become much more complex while volume has increased and the need for rapid turnaround has become more apparent.

The Bureau of Health Statistics of the Department of Public Health is at the center of that process. Its mission is to record complete and accurate vital event records in order to provide quality services in a timely manner. The Bureau registers approximately 40,000 Births, 28,000 Deaths, 200 Fetal Deaths, 20,000 Marriage, and 8,000 Dissolution events; and issues approximately 100,000 certified copies each year. The Bureau is responsible for the secure filing, amending and managing all Vital Events that occur in Iowa. In addition IDPH is responsible for the integrity and operation of the registration systems, and oversight of the Vital Record registration process. The Bureau is the central repository for all Vital Record Events and provides statistical data and reporting to a variety of Federal and State agencies.

Death records are currently a paper process handled by multiple parties who are each responsible for crucial pieces of information which must result in an accurate, complete Vital Record event certificate. This process is labor intensive and may require several contacts and changes among medical and mortuary professionals before satisfactory completion. The current death certification process is generally as follows:

When a death occurs in Iowa it is the responsibility of the Funeral Director to meet with the family and gather the necessary information regarding the decedent in order to complete the information required for the death certificate. The funeral director manually fills out that information and then must track down the decedent's attending physician and drive to the physician's facility to have the death certificate certified. A feature of the new EDRS system would be able to provide a mobile device to a family member for the purpose of collecting the personal information required on the death certificate.

To certify, the physician must sign, date and put in writing the cause of death on the certificate. After the physician certifies the death certificate, the funeral director must drive to the County Recorder's office in the county where the death occurred. The County Recorder files the death in that County and provides the necessary certified copies to the Funeral Director needed for the family. The County Recorder will then mail the certificates to the State to be filed again.

Once completed, the death certificate is submitted by the funeral director to the county registrar. The registrar then forwards the form to the Bureau of Health Statistics for registration. The Bureau then processes each event manually, as well as performing various back-office processing and statistical activities. By statute, the death file is then provided to various organizations and government agencies such as the Social Security Administration, voter registration, Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Department of Justice, and Iowa Revenue Department. These agencies use the information to update their records and take appropriate actions.



The current process causes lengthy delays which directly affect the families, preventing them from collecting insurance benefits and handling legal matters.

The electronic system will allow the Funeral Director to create the death record online, send a message 'electronically' notifying the certifying Physician to electronically sign, date and enter the cause of death. Once completed the Funeral Director can submit a request directly through the system to the County Recorder's Office and request the number of certified copies needed.

The electronic system will also provide a centralized database of all death occurrences for Iowa as far back as July 1, 1880. Centralizing this death data and implementation of the customer service module will provide access on-line to the descendants of deceased Iowans requesting copies of family death certificates.

Other states have turned to Electronic Death Registration Systems (EDRS) with great success to the extent that off-the-shelf EDRS products are available for purchase and modification to fit particular needs. Neighboring states are eager to have Iowa join them in this modernization. Iowa has been working toward the modernization of its entire vital records system, and has chosen to approach the death registry as its first priority.

The Iowa Department of Public Health now turns to the **IOWAccess** program and the Department of Administrative Services for its support and partnership in this important endeavor.

Expected Results:

What are the tangible and intangible benefits of this purchase for this agency and/or state government?

- Integrates all tasks associated with registering a death event in Iowa and creates a single record system between the Bureau and all county registrars.
- Minimizes the cost of registering a death event.
- Improves the timeliness of death registration and certificate issuance.
- Improves the security of personal information on the death certificate and overall integrity of the record.
- Facilitates obtaining the necessary information required.
- Improves quality and timeliness of death event data.
- Facilitates timely availability for issuance of certified copies of the death record by allowing any county registrar to access and issue a death event regardless of the county of occurrence. Currently, the county registrar is limited to the events occurring in their county only.
- Accommodates printing of paper permits and other forms as needed.
- Ensures adherence to State information system security standards and requirements.
- Increases Social Security Administration contract amount per death event data paid to the Bureau.
- Improves the timely availability of death data for public health planning and assessment.

Can these benefits be quantified in financial terms? If yes, please explain.

- Reduces the time to report a registered death event to the Social Security Administration (SSA), resulting in increased contract reimbursement rate. Current payment structure is based



on number of days from the 'date of death' to the 'date reported to SSA', resulting in a larger unit price per record paid to the Bureau.

- In addition, an EDRS will increase the amount paid by the Social Security Administration for a verified social security number (SSN) reported on the death certificate. Verifications of SSNs are built into the application and verified upon data entry by the funeral director.
- Ensures the Bureau will receive full compensation for death data reported to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) by enabling the Bureau to meet the delivery schedule established in our contract.
- Reduces costs associated with maintaining 100 different record sets between the Bureau and all county registrars. The EDRS will eliminate the need to send corrected paper copies to the county registrar in the county of occurrence, saving staff time and costs for both the state and county registrar.
- Eliminates costly travel by funeral director staff associated with obtaining the medical certification and registration of death certificates in the county of death. For example, residents of rural counties often pass away at a hospital 50 miles or more away from their home, causing the local funeral director to drive to and from the doctor's office and the county registrar's office, sometimes multiple times.
- Enhances the opportunity for public health agencies to obtain grants and program funding due to more timely, complete and accurate data required to submit grant applications.

How will you be more effective as a result of this purchase?

The result will be the improved accuracy and expedited completion of the death registry process at all steps of the process, from funeral directors, medical professionals and county recorders to the state registrar. Accurate and timely information will be available to families and heirs as well as "need-to know" agencies and businesses. Both the state-local and public-private partnerships will be enhanced.

The current manual process for registering and correcting death certificates causes delays in issuing certified copies to survivors to claim benefits and settle estates. Many of these delays would be avoided by the implementation of an electronic death registry. An electronic registry ensures that the Bureau can provide services to funeral directors and surviving family members in a more timely fashion, and with fewer complaints. The electronic registry will help ensure that all death event records are stored in a secure environment, and prevent fraudulent use of these legal documents, further protecting the citizens of Iowa.

How will service to your customers be enhanced as a result of this purchase?

The electronic death registry will greatly reduce the time required for the registration and issuance of death certificates. The EDRS would replace the current cumbersome, lengthy paper process. Health care facilities, medical providers, and funeral directors will access a single electronic record to complete their required data items.

Medical professionals will improve and expedite Cause of Death certification. The current paper system requires the funeral director to present the partially-completed certificate to the appropriate medical certifier to enter the 'cause of death.' This part of the process is the most time-consuming and frustrating for the funeral directors and grieving families. However, with the



electronic registry, the medical certifier will be able to accomplish their portion of the record online. The Bureau will have a more active role in monitoring the status of outstanding records and prompt the medical certifier as needed. Also, the system will have built-in help for the medical certifiers, which will result in a more accurate accounting of the death event.

Interaction between funeral directors and County Registrars will be expedited. Once the cause of death is entered, the funeral director must submit the death certificate for registration to the county registrar in the county of death only. With the electronic death registry, registration is real-time and the process can be completed.

Access by families and funeral directors to completed certificates is enhanced. As all county registrars will have access to statewide electronically-registered death records, it will no longer be necessary for funeral directors and families to go to the county of death or the state registrar to obtain certificate copies. Centralizing of death data will provide easy access on-line to the descendants requesting additional death certificates.

Interim processes can be initiated without delay. With the EDRS, a "Fact of Death" interim certificate will be available for issuance prior to the medical certification, allowing families to initiate estate settlements, while the death certificate, including the cause of death information, would be needed primarily by insurance companies. The EDRS will fundamentally enhance the current system and improve the service to the descendants and funeral director, who in turn can provide better service to their customer.

Errors and omissions can be greatly reduced. Iowa law requires the registration of death events within a specified time period. However, a significant number of certificates are not finalized until many weeks after the event due to errors or omissions. Late-filed, partially completed or inaccurate certificates are not acceptable to the citizens of Iowa, nor do they meet federal administrative needs or satisfy the information demands of local, state and federal agencies, adversely affecting mortality statistics. Automation of the vital record registration processes and providing the decedent and family members the ability to pre-register their personal information is the key to resolving these long-standing issues.

An electronic death registry will eliminate the "paper-chasing" that funeral directors must do, improving timeliness and accuracy. The system will be designed to catch data entry errors that often go unnoticed until after final registration and the family receives certified copies. Avoiding error at the front end of the process will significantly reduce delays caused by record correction, return to the county registrar, and funeral director, who must then exchange certificates with the grieving family. With EDRS, any necessary corrections after registration are completed in the electronic system and are immediately available for replacement.

Vital records workload will be better managed, resulting in better service to citizens. Information previously provided by the Social Security Administration's death master file is no longer available, sharply increasing the demand for fact of death data. Government agencies, the insurance industry, retirement benefit plans, and the financial industry, have turned to state vital records offices to assist in meeting their legal requirements to disperse funds, resolve claims and prevent the fraudulent use of a deceased person's identity. An EDRS will enable the Bureau to provide the information in a secure, prompt manner to meet these needs.



Testing and Acceptance:

The selected EDRS application must pass all requirements set by IDPH, along with federal and state laws, standards and rules. Development and implementation of the final deliverables software must be approved by IDPH State Registrar, IDPH Vital Records Project Manager and selected IDPH Testing Team.

Some of the Interested Parties:

- Citizens of Iowa
- Surviving family members
- County Registrars
- Hospitals
- Care Facilities
- Hospice
- Medical health care providers
- Funeral directors and funeral establishments
- Iowa Funeral Directors Association (IFDA)
- National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)
- National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS)
- State Registrar
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Department of Homeland Security
- Iowa Departments of Transportation and Revenue
- The Iowa judiciary.
- Retirement benefit plans
- Insurance and financial industry

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

- Citizens of Iowa
- Decedent's family members
- Funeral Directors and Funeral Establishments
- Hospitals
- Clerks of Court
- Medical Professionals
- Medical Examiners
- Public health partners and researchers
- State and County Registrars
- Vital Records staff
- Insurance industry
- Retirement benefit plans
- State and local government agencies

Standards:



The selected EDRS application must adhere to all Federal and State laws and rules for registration of vital events, along with IDPH and DAS-ITE standards.

Architecture:

The EDRS application selected will be compatible with the DAS-ITE architecture and endpoints.

Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery:

The EDRS application will support Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery activities and planning.

Recommendations from the State CIO:

NOTE: Where applicable, all DAS GSE Procurement and IA Administrative Code 11-105 and 11-106 requirements and procedures are to be followed. Reference: <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/>, specifically: <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/adminrules/>.

Duplication recommendation from the State CIO to the DAS Director:

- a) Is there duplication within Government? *(Please identify duplication at the agency level, as well as within the enterprise)*
- b) Can an existing program be modified to address a new need?
- c) Do you have any similar program in existence?
- d) Have you sought IT procurements for similar programs in the past?
- e) Do you have purchasing documents for similar programs?
- f) Do you have similar purchasing documents that could be used as a starting point for this program?
- g) Is there anything you could provide that could assist the agency with this IT procurement?
- h) Are there alternatives available to the agencies?

Recommendation of the State CIO to the DAS Director:

Authorize this IT procurement	Yes <u>X</u> No ____
Alternatives suggested by the State CIO (see comments below)	Yes ____ No <u>X</u>

Additional comments from the State CIO: **TEC recommended IOWAccess funds of \$500,000, with periodic performance reports, CIO subsequently approved.**

DAS Director's action:

Authorize this IT procurement	Yes <u>X</u> No ____
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The above IT procurement concept approved by Director Carroll on 1/29/13

Comments: **None.**